



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FOR CLIMATE ACTION




Insights from a Climate Action Breakfast with Livvy Drake, Sustainable Sidekicks

Want to inspire
behaviour change for
the environment?

Start here



Be specific about what behaviour you want to change and your audience. Different people have different motivations.



What can you do to make the desired behaviour the socially accepted 'norm'? Who will be the key messengers for the change?

What barriers are stopping people from doing the behaviour you want them to do?

What systems or infrastructure need to change to make the desired behaviour easier?

How can you communicate this positively?

Reinforce desirable behaviour rather than demonising the old one.

Emphasise how many people are making the change to inspire stragglers to join the new status quo.



Awareness vs behaviour change

There is a big difference between raising awareness and changing behaviours.

Information doesn't lead to behaviour change

The knowledge-action gap demonstrates that people who know, still don't change their behaviour.

Plenty of people know that flying isn't great for the environment but still fly — so knowledge isn't enough.





The education approach

A passive approach is to 'raise awareness' by sharing information e.g. putting up a poster, organising a talk or sending an email.



The behaviour approach

Instead, try an active approach to inspire action! This includes creating an environment that makes changes clear and simple e.g. asking people to write a pledge and displaying the pledges for everyone to see.

Cognitive influences

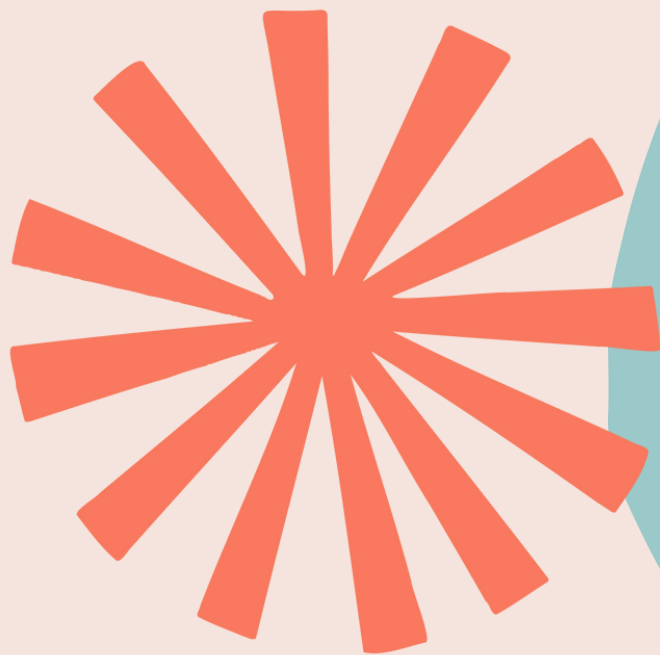
Our brains are wired for short-term thinking, as they want to keep us safe and out of danger. This is why we focus on the now instead of big long-term goals.

To engage people, you need to focus on the immediate and local effects of climate impacts.



Overcoming perceived effort

Two thirds of the effort of change is in our head. To overcome the brain's perception of difficulty we need to give it a go and have a positive experience to get past any misconceptions and concerns.



Example: People were concerned about cycling to work, as they thought roads were dangerous and road conditions were poor. After a trial, people got over their misconceptions.

Thinking is energy intensive

There are two parts to our brain: the slow, systemic part and the fast, instinctive part.

- The slow and logical part is where we do our rational thinking which can drain our energy. So, our brain tries to limit the thinking and instead, it relies on habits to make decisions. We're running on auto pilot most of the time.
- Our brain is always looking for the easy option. Most of all, we're emotionally motivated — we want to feel good.

Tip: Use visual images to shortcut the thinking brain e.g. add images to recycling bins.

Overcoming psychological factors

When we're designing interventions, consider how to remove the friction and design 'a path of least resistance'.

As well as removing friction from desirable behaviours, consider how to make it harder for people to do the 'wrong' behaviour e.g. charging for car parks and plastic bags.

Infrastructure changes

Infrastructure is one of the main influences on how people behave.

People will choose the easiest or most familiar option.
If we want to change this, use choice architecture.

This is where decisions we make are affected by:

- ☰ Which are the default choices
- ☰ How options are presented
- ☰ The range of options that are available

Examples:

- ★ Remove bins from under desks and move them to a central place with visible labels.
- ★ Put plant-based meals at the top of the menu or put the salads at the start of the buffet and the meat at the end.

Social influences

We have survived this long because we have stuck together as a tribe, so we really do care what people think.

Many people do things because they make them look good.



Not everyone
thinks like you,
so you need to
consider who your
audience is.

Modelling behaviours

Use social proof to show how many people are doing the ideal behaviour.

Model this desirable behaviour by:

- Profiling employees who exemplify the behaviour with public recognition and rewards.
- Display publicly the positive results
- Bring colleagues together to share stories of how they changed their behaviour



Public social feedback

Social acknowledgements are more effective than financial rewards for sustaining behaviour.

Badges of honour are visual and social recognition which can be more effective for sustained behaviour change e.g. award ceremonies, office prizes.



Communications

How you communicate matters,
especially to audiences that are
not engaged.

It's essential to reinforce the
desired behaviours, avoiding
scaremongering and guilt.



Trusted messengers

Consider who is the right messenger for your audience.



Authority figures

Authority bias demonstrates that people trust those who are perceived to be experts or authority figures.



Relatable messengers

Numerous studies show people trust people who look like or are relatable to them.





Framing

Tweak the language you use to show the advantages of the behaviour change.

Not everyone is motivated by reducing costs — so also focus on delivering a great service, retaining employees, and maintaining repeat business.

Understand your employees' motivation:

-  Why do they do their job?
-  Are they more interested in fun or health?

Feedback loops

Give people the feel-good factor after they have changed their behaviour.

Use feedback loops so people can see their actions are making a difference,
e.g. Regular email updates,
and celebrations of staff
who have taken action.

Tell stories of the real
people taking action.
If we make a public
commitment, we are more
likely to follow through, as
we want to live up to what
we say we'll do.



Tap into positive emotions

“Campaigns that evoke positive emotions are more efficient at motivating behaviour change and encouraging people to stick with pro-environmental behaviours.” — Campaigns that Work

Effective emotions are:

- Pride – instead of guilt
- Hope – from hearing about others taking action
- Optimism – about the future
- Love – instead of negativity



For more Climate Action
Programme events and
resources visit:
bit.ly/CAP-Home



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

SUSTAINABLE
sidekicks

**Produced by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership, with
thanks to Livvy Drake of Sustainable Sidekicks.**

Livvy Drake is a behaviour change expert and sustainability consultant. She offers workshops, training and consultancy.

Find out more about her services to support positive
behaviour change in your workplace